



Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod Evangelical Lutheran Church in America

God's work. Our hands.

July 2010

Dear Colleagues,

I am writing on behalf of the Domestic Bench of the Conference of Bishops with a request for you to make contact within the next several days with your U.S. Senator and U.S. Representative asking that they support the **Child Nutrition Reauthorization Act** that is before Congress. Please encourage them to support President Obama's request for a \$10 billion increase over the coming ten years rather than the Senate's \$4.5 billion or the House's \$8 billion over ten years.

Nothing is more poignant than the photograph of a starving child. We see, and we are moved to weep and to action. We make a contribution to the charity that is seeking to help. Children all over the world, weakened by hunger, are made more susceptible to disease, and have fewer opportunities for education, employment and a healthy life.

But hunger is not just a phenomenon across the globe. There are hungry people, men, women and children in the United States, and also in our five county area, the Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod. There are public and private safety nets in place, and most of our congregations participate in such feeding ministries. But still there are people who fall between the cracks. Many of them are children, our country's future. Children are more vulnerable to the effects of hunger than adults, especially young children. Their brains are still forming. Serious deprivation of essential nutrition can affect them forever, as surely as fetal alcohol syndrome, disease or genetic mutations.

Hunger does not just impact a hidden few in our region. Here are the 2009 statistics for the percent of children enrolled in the public schools in our Delaware Valley who are eligible for free or reduced lunch: ***Chester County 17%, Montgomery County 18%, Bucks County 19%, Delaware County 32% and Philadelphia County 76%***. The needs of these children do not go away when the school year ends. For example, summer is the hungriest season in Philadelphia as it is elsewhere, because an estimated 150,000 public, charter, and Catholic schoolchildren who eat free or reduced-price breakfasts and lunches during the school year are cut off.

The City and the Archdiocese of Philadelphia are hosting feeding sites this summer, but these sites cannot serve all in need. Estimates by the state Department of Education and others show that the meals at summer city sites will feed around 80,000 young people. That leaves around 70,000 children without free or subsidized meals.

Thankfully, in addition to the private and faith based efforts there are government programs that target hunger. And one of them, the **Child Nutrition Act**, is about to expire. It funds, among other things:

- WIC
- School Lunch Program
- School Breakfast Program
- Child and Adult Care Food Program
- Summer Food Service Program
- After School Snack and Meal Program
- WIC Farmers Market Nutrition Program
- Fresh Fruits and Vegetable Program
- Special Milk Program

(Learn more about the Child Nutrition Act at <http://bit.ly/akXwH8> on the ELCA website or visit the Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania's Action Center at http://ga6.org/campaign/Child_Nutrition.)

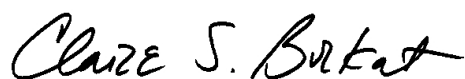
Nobody is in favor of kids going hungry. This isn't a partisan issue. But it is an issue that needs advocates. The Obama administration is asking for **\$10 billion over the next ten years**, to raise meal reimbursements by **6 cents**, and to incorporate more eligible children into the school lunch and supplemental feeding programs. The House version of the bill requests just \$8 billion dollars. And the Senate bill trims it down to \$4.5 billion.

Southeastern Pennsylvania Lutherans care about our children. We care about all children. Along with other leaders of faith communities, I encourage Lutheran leaders to make the elimination of childhood hunger a high priority. Give generously and volunteer with charities that feed the hungry, and help to establish summer feeding sites for the children who are not served. You can host a site for as little as one week. (In Philadelphia, call the Catholic Archdiocese Nutritional Services Office, (215) 895-3470 x727 and ask for Qia. Congregations in the surrounding counties can contact Sue Still at sstill@state.pa.us or call (717) 787-7698.)

Most of all, **contact** Senators Casey and Specter and your local representative in Congress and encourage them to support funding of **the Childhood Nutrition Reauthorization Act at the \$10 billion** level that the administration has asked for. Use the addresses and/or phone numbers below or visit Lutheran Advocacy Ministry in Pennsylvania's online campaign at http://ga6.org/campaign/Child_Nutrition to send an electronic letter.

We cannot afford to let our children go hungry.

Sincerely and prayerfully,



Bishop Claire Burkat

U.S. Senators and Representatives in Congress for Southeastern Pennsylvania Synod

To contact your representative(s), send letters to their district office listed below or call their Washington or local offices. For full contact information visit your representative's website at <http://www.house.gov> or <http://senate.gov>.

United States Senate

Senator Arlen Specter

DC phone: (202) 224-4254
Philadelphia office:
600 Arch Street
Suite 9400
Philadelphia, PA 19106
Phone: (215) 597-7200

Senator Robert P. Casey Jr.

DC phone: (202) 224-6324
Toll Free: (866) 802-2833
Philadelphia office:
2000 Market Street, Suite 1870
Philadelphia, PA 19103
Phone: (215) 405-9660
Fax: (215) 405-9669

United States House of Representatives

If you are not sure which district you reside in, visit <http://www.house.gov> and enter your zip code in the search box to find your representative.

District 1 – US Rep. Bob Brady

DC phone: (202) 225-4731
District office:
1907-09 S. Broad Street
Philadelphia, PA 19148
Phone: (215) 389-4627
Fax: (215) 389-4636

District 2 – US Rep. Chaka Fattah

DC phone: (202) 225-4001
District office:
6632 Germantown Avenue
Philadelphia, PA 19119
Phone: (215) 848-9386

District 6 – US Rep. Jim Gerlach

DC phone: (202) 225-4315
District office:
111 East Uwchlan Avenue
Exton, PA 19341
Phone: (610) 594-1415

District 7 – US Rep. Joe Sestak

DC phone: (202) 225-2011
District office:
600 N. Jackson Street
Suite 203
Media, PA 19063
Phone: (610) 892-8623

District 8 – US Rep. Patrick Murphy

DC phone: (202) 225-4276
District office:
72 North Main St
Doylestown, PA 18091
Phone: (215) 348-1194

District 13 – US Rep. Allyson Schwartz

DC phone: (202) 225-6111
District office:
706 West Avenue
Jenkintown, PA 19046
Phone: (215) 517-6572

District 15 – US Rep. Charlie Dent

DC phone: (202) 225-6411
District office:
206 Main Street
East Greenville, PA 18041
Phone: (215) 541-4106